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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## First Ever Chicago Humanities Summit To Take Place Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014

Co-Presented by the Chicago Humanities Festival,  
The American Academy of Arts and Sciences,  
And the Modern Language Association

Inspired by the Congressionally-Commissioned Report *The Heart of the Matter*

**CHICAGO, IL—November 21, 2013—** The **Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF)**, the **American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS)** and the **Modern Language Association (MLA)** come together to co-present the first ever **Chicago Humanities Summit, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014 from 9 a.m.–Noon** at the **Gratz Center, Fourth Presbyterian Church** (126 E Chestnut St). Inspired by the Congressionally-commissioned report *The Heart of the Matter*, the Summit will explore opportunities within the public humanities, and how the academic and cultural sectors can maximize the impact of the humanities within the broader community.

“It’s time to break free from the doleful discourse on the ‘crisis of the humanities’ that organizes so much of the national conversation,” said CHF Artistic Director **Matti Bunzl**. “The recent publication of *The Heart of the Matter* has opened the door for academic leaders to position the humanities as central to our society and culture. The Chicago Humanities Summit will take stock of these initiatives and advance efforts to further dismantle the ‘Ivory Tower’.”

The Chicago Humanities Summit will host some of the Nation’s top academic and cultural leaders, including **Richard Brodhead** (Co-chair of the AAAS Commission & President of Duke), **Marianne Hirsch** (President, MLA & Professor at Columbia University), **Don Randel** (Chair of the Board, AAAS & Former President of the University of Chicago), and **John Rowe** (Co-Chair of the AAAS Commission & Former CEO of Exelon). More than 200 directors, deans, professors, and university presidents are expected to attend.

The Summit will begin with a conversation about *The Heart of the Matter*, with co-chairs Rowe and Brodhead, and Commission member Diane Wood. The day will also include several breakout sessions, with topics including: **How to Teach Public Humanities**, **How to Start your Own Humanities Festival**, **How to Build Relationships with Foundations**, and **How to work with your State Humanities Council**.

“The MLA is delighted to co-present the Chicago Humanities Summit with the Chicago Humanities Festival and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences,” said Hirsch. “MLA members are involved in public humanities in myriad ways and the practical how-to sessions which comprise the summit promise to provide collaboration and exchange beyond the walls of the academy.”

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The Chicago Humanities Summit is co-sponsored by the Franke Institute for the Humanities at the University of Chicago, the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities at Northwestern University, the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Center for the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the Oberman Center for Advanced Studies at the University of Iowa.

Participation in the Chicago Humanities Summit is FREE and registration is currently open. The deadline to register for the Summit is Friday, December 6. To register, click [here](#). For questions, contact **Jeanette Goddard**, 312-661-1028 x718 or [jeanette@chicagohumanities.org](mailto:jeanette@chicagohumanities.org).

### **About the Chicago Humanities Festival**

The Chicago Humanities Festival began in 1989 as a dream shared by a determined group of Chicago's cultural leaders eager to extend the riches of the humanities to everyone. Since that first year, some of the world's most exciting thinkers, artists, and performers have come to Chicago each fall for a festival that celebrates ideas in the context of civic life. Past Festival themes include Laughter, The Body, tech knowledge, America, and this past fall's **Animal: What Makes Us Human**. Under the leadership of **Executive Director Phillip Bahar** and **Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**, CHF partners with Chicago's premier cultural institutions and the festival has become an annual highlight for thousands of people from Chicago and beyond. In addition to the annual fall festival, CHF also presents the spring **Stages, Sights & Sounds**, a global performance festival for families, students, and theatergoers of any age, and programs throughout the year that encourage the study and enjoyment of the humanities. Visit [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org) for more information.

### **About the American Academy of Arts and Sciences**

Since its founding in 1780, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has served the nation as a champion of scholarship, civil dialogue, and useful knowledge. As one of the nation's oldest learned societies and independent policy research centers, the Academy convenes leaders from the academic, business, and government sectors to address critical challenges facing our global society. Through studies, publications, and programs on the Humanities, Arts, and Education; Science, Engineering, and Technology; Global Security and Energy; and American Institutions and the Public Good, the Academy provides authoritative and nonpartisan policy advice to decision-makers in government, academia, and the private sector. The Academy's membership of 4,600 Fellows and 600 Foreign Honorary Members includes many of the most accomplished scholars and practitioners worldwide. To learn more, visit [amacad.org](http://amacad.org).

### **About the Modern Language Association**

Founded in 1883, the Modern Language Association of America provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. MLA members host an annual convention and other meetings, work with related organizations, and sustain one of the finest publishing programs in the humanities. For over a hundred years, members have worked to strengthen the study and teaching of language and literature. The MLA has nearly 30,000 members in 100 countries. It holds an annual convention, with meetings on a wide variety of subjects, as well as smaller seminars across the country. The 129th MLA Annual Convention will take place in Chicago January 9–12, 2014. To learn more, visit [mla.org](http://mla.org).

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